THE

International Collector

—AND—

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Fiscal or Postage Stamps.

[Continued]

C. P. M.

Then there is another popular argument against the collection of stamps other than postal stamps. Fiscals and Telegraphs, the average collector will tell you, are in many cases of inconvenient size. They take up too much space in one's album and in addition to this they are not pretty. "Look, for instance," we can imagine one of them saying, "at the beer and tobacco labels of Canada, lanky strips of paper that look at first glance like chunks cut from a tape-measure." And there are of course a few other stamps that are difficult to cope with on account of their size. Now this is undoubtedly a real difficulty, but it is one that can be overcome by a very simple experiment.

Collect only ADHESIVE fiscals and telegraph stamps! By this means all undesirable varieties, such as the unwieldy beer and tobacco labels, already referred to, and a few other "unmanageables" are excluded from one's collection. We might go on almost indefinitely dealing with the real or fancied objection to the collection and

study of fiscals and telegraph stamps, but it will be easier and more to the point to devote ourselves to the advantages of fiscalism against the present day postalism.

In the first place fiscal stamps are every bit as interesting as postal stamps. They offer a rich variety of design and shape; they are of earlier origin than postage stamps and consequently have a far more varied and interesting history.

True, they do not provide the same bewildering array of minute varieties; but this may surely be counted an advantage. There are no plate numbers and but few provisionals. Nevertheless the careful student of fiscal stamps will find plenty with which to occupy himself in the way of varieties of paper, perforation, printing.

Nor does this by any means exhaust the list of advantages attaching to the fiscals. Perhaps the crowning glory of the fiscal stamp is that it has not been Seebeckised. There are no unnecessary issues either of fiscals or of telegraphs. The fiscalist again has no Chunkings or Kewkiangs to bother him. Moreover, reprints and forgeries are an unknown quantity. On every hand and in every possible way the collector of fiscal and telegraph stamps is absolutely secured against the various

forms of fraud that endanger postage stamp collecting.

Above all, there is this important consideration. Fiscal collecting is not the expensive pursuit that postage stamp collecting has lately become. The present prices of fiscal and telegraph stamps are remarkably low, and in many cases out of all proportion to the real scarcity of the stamps.

(To be continued)

ORANGE FREE STATE PROVISIONALS FOR ORANGE RIVER COLONY

The machine used for making the overprint in this case was only capable of overprinting sixty stamps at one time, and as these Orange Free State stamps were in sheets of 240, it was therefore necessary to put the sheet in the machine four times before it was ready for issue; and it is therefore easily understood that the sheet would have to be turned round in this process, and the control margins for the sheets being of different widths, it would be practically impossible to print the stamps in exactly the same place, tete-beche pairs, etc.

The principal errors in this issue are the varieties ½d. to 5s. green without the stop after V. All these are known to exist, but are extremely rare and difficult to obtain, although the writer has seen the 2½d. on 3d. blue quoted at £5 unused, and the 3d. blue quoted at 10s. unused. Most of the other errors and varieties (which are numerous) are fairly common, occurring as they did in most of the sheets surcharged.

When the supply of the 2½d. was exhausted (in the latter part of 1900), the current 2½d. blue Cape of Good Hope stamps were overprinted *Orange River Colony* in three lines in black, and this stamp was issued on the 10th of August, 1900. There was one variety of this value, *i. e.*, the stamp without the stop after Colony.

This stamp was followed shortly after by the ½d. green (Cape of Good Hope, October, 1900) being surcharged in the same manner. There exists in this value, in addition to the error of omission of stop, as on the 2½d., an error with the overprint double.

The next stamp required was the 4d. value, and to meet this requirement, the 6d. blue Orange Free State (already sur-

charged with the V. R. I.) was surcharged with the figure 4, with a bar being put through the overprint 6d., the original value.

In July, 1902, the 1d. value having been exhausted, the 1902 1d. carmine issue of the Cape of Good Hope was called into requisition and overprinted "Orange River Colony" in the same manner as the ½d. and 2½d. had previously been done; (i. e., no stop after Colony) the same omission occurring in the printing of some of these.

In August of the same year, more 6d. stamps being required, the 6d. blue O. F. S. stamps were overprinted E. R. I.

The last of these provisionals was the 5s. green, overprinted V. R. I. and "one shilling," and an eight-rayed star to blot out the previous numeral of 5s.

This completes the list of provisionals for the Orange Free State; stamps bearing the portrait of King Edward VII being issued in 1903. Since when no provisionals have been issued.

S. T.

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Proofs and Essays.

(Continued)

Supposing the above explanations have been digested, the reader may now ask:—"But what is the attraction and fascination that surrounds proofs? They are not postage stamps, and have never done any sort of postal service whatever.

The last remark is both natural and true, but surely it is hardly a just explanation for the unpopularity of proofs. Are several stamps in your catalogues worthy of the name postage stamps? I think not.

Taking the matter from a sensible point of view, it is quite absurd to argue about proofs "not being postage stamps;" they were never supposed to be, and this point has no right to make proofs unpopular, or account, in any way, for their neglect at the hands of philatelists.

The most similar hobby to stamps is, undoubtedly, the collection of engravings, which is a very popular pursuit at the present time. Take a lesson and an example from the "Print" collector. Does he not have a special weakness for proofs and incomplete impressions which show the engraver's progress in his arduous work.

It is practically the only advanced specialist who has discovered the great attractions of proofs and essays; their quaintness, their rareness, and, in case of essays, their originality.

In the last number of this journal I endeavored to show how a single stamp could be specialized, but I purposely waited until this month to introduce the question of proofs, etc. A collector may specialize a single stamp to his heart's desire, he may possess shades, blocks, panes, etc., and yet his collection lacks a finished touch—it has no proofs! To possess no proofs or essays may not appear, at first thought, to be of much importance but, nevertheless, a fair show of these neglected items at once makes one's collection twice as interesting as formerly.

First, you have the various designs—the many rejected and the lucky accepted one. Consider for a moment the interest they arouse! Let your thoughts wander. Did the authorities choose the best design? No! Why on earth was not this one chosen? Think of the interest and romance attached to this branch of philately. Think of the many discussions you may have with friends as to the whys and wherefores of this and that "trial."

S. C. F.

(To be continued)

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